

***DEDICATED***

with profound reverence

to

the holy memory

of

the immortal, blessed, supreme yogi,

and the most exalted

**SHREE SWAMI PARMANAND JI**

of

**Shree Paramhans Ashram Ansuiya**

(Chitrakoot)

# A HUMBLE APPEAL

Since quite a good number of Sanskrit words had to be included in the English rendering of Yathartha Geeta it is useful to explain briefly why and how they have been used:

- (I) To take some more prominent examples, words such as *dharm*, *yog*, *yagya*, *sanskar*, *varn*, *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*, *varnsankar*, *karm*, *kshetra*, *kshetranya*, and *pranayam*, which occur through the whole book, are really untranslatable into English. *Dharm*, for instance, is not "religion;" and *karm* is something more than "action." Despite this, however, approximate English equivalents have been used wherever possible, but only, of course, if they do not distort or misrepresent the original meaning. So "action," "property," and "sphere" have been used for *karm*, *varn*, and *kshetr* respectively. Approximate English equivalents have also been used for *sattwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, taking care that they do not obstruct the flow or rhythm of language. But it was not found possible to have English substitutes for *dharm*, *yog*, *yagya*, *sanskar*, and *varnsankar*, and these words as well as many others have been used as they are. But since the meaning of all Sanskrit words used in the rendering (whether with or without English equivalents) is fully clarified in either footnotes or the text itself, readers who have no familiarity with Sanskrit or Hindi will find no difficulty in comprehending them. The main object in this translation has been to use the unavoidable Sanskrit words or their English substitutes in such a way that they do not look like patchwork and obstruct reading in any way.

(II) As for the English transcription of these Sanskrit words, normal English alphabet has been used. Phonetic script and diacritical marks have been strictly dispensed with because they discourage readers and keep them away from Indological books. So संस्कार has been transcribed as *sanskar* (that is how the word is spoken) rather than as *sanskara*; and . . . as *yagya* (that is how it is pronounced) rather than as *yajna*. The same principle of transcribing Sanskrit words in normal English alphabet with a close proximity to the way these words are actually spoken has been followed throughout the book. I believe that this way makes for easier, smoother reading.

(III) Without meaning any offence to other scholarly writers, in deference to the same principle of transcribing Sanskrit words in the normal English alphabet with a close proximity to their actual pronunciation I have also dispensed with the practice of adding an "a" to the last pure consonants of English transcripts of Sanskrit words. So I have transcribed कृष्ण as *Krishn* instead of *Krishna*, अर्जुन as *Arjun* instead of *Arjuna*, महाभारत as *Mahabharat* instead of *Mahabharata*, योग as *yog* instead of *yoga*, धर्म as

*dharm* instead of *dharma*, कर्म as *karm* instead of *karma*, and so on. The argument that the sound of the ultimate pure consonant is incomplete unless an "a" is added to it is untenable, for had this been the case, the entire system of spelling in English would have to be changed. If the last "m" in "farm" is a complete consonant sound, why should *dharm* be transcribed as *dharma*? Keeping this in view, one cannot but conclude that people who have acted upon the illogical premise have done a singular disservice to Sanskrit (their own language) by introducing a system of transcription that has led to the distortion of the pronunciation of such a large number of commonly used words. So, whatever be the assumption behind the practice of adding an "a" to the ultimate pure consonant of Sanskrit/Indian words in their English transcription, in actual practice this "appendix" is treated as a full vowel with the sound of "a" as in "father" or "rather" or "bath" rather than as a part of the consonant itself.

(IV) Just because Sanskrit or Hindi words are transcribed in English alphabet they do not become English. So application of the usual English practice of using an "s" to make plurals to these words is improper. The plural of *karm* is *karm*, not *karms*. The plural of *ved* is *ved*, not *veds*. So "s" has not been used to make plurals of Sanskrit nouns in this translation.

**One of Swamiji's disciples**